

ECONOMIC LIFE

59

the juice being allowed to float downstream with the current. The 226
fish rise to the surface stupefied or dead and are taken by hand. A
large quantity of roots is required and the whole lineage or even
village usually takes part. At the present time the method is rarely
used, because of the labor involved.

The natives are very fond of two sorts of crayfish. One of
these has short legs and large claws, like a lobster, while the other
has long legs and no claws. Parties often go several miles from the
village to catch crayfish in the small, swift mountain streams, stay-
ing out all night. The animals are usually caught by the light of
torches, which stupefies them so that they can be picked up. In
the daytime they are lured from their holes by means of a white
or glittering object on the end of a stick. A bit of tin from a can is
now used. They are then caught by hand or between two bits of
wood, to avoid their claws.

Eels and other fish are preserved by smoking, without salt. They 25/
are not cleaned. The smoking is done on small platforms of open-
work bamboo which are hung over the fireplace in the dwelling
(Fig. 3, c). In spite of the crudity of the method, fish preserved
in this way can be kept for a year or more and, when cooked in native
fashion, are hardly inferior to the fresh article. Fish are nearly [252]
always boiled.

HONEY AND BEESWAX

Honey and beeswax are of great importance to all the Tanala. 23/
The latter is one of their main exports. The native bees are rather [439]
small and dark brown or black. Most of the swarms live in hollow
trees or among the rocks, but the Tanala make hives, put them near
old swarms, and wash them inside with honey in the hope that new
swarms will settle in them. Such swarms belong to the maker of [422]
the hive, while wild swarms belong to the finder.

The hives are made from hollowed-out logs with loosely fitting,
inset ends. The cracks around the ends are large enough to allow
the insects to enter. The hives are usually 3 to 5 feet long and about
1 foot in diameter. They are laid horizontally in the forks of trees,
often as much as twenty feet from the ground. This is to protect
the swarm from animals.

To obtain the honey and wax, the swarm is first stupefied with 222. ●
smoke from torches. The end of the hive is then pried out and all
the comb removed at once, destroying the colony. A large wooden
bowl of special form is used for collecting the honey (Fig. 4, e). The

- 222 bowl has four equally spaced lugs which are pierced vertically. Slender ropes of equal length pass through these and are tied together above the bowl, where a single long rope is attached. Sometimes the bowl is encased in rawhide, as a precaution against breakage. A few specimens are provided with flat wooden covers which slide on the four small ropes. The honey bowl is hung from a limb beside the hive and lowered to the ground when full.

- 257 The comb is taken to the village, where it is put into a sack of coarse matting (Fig. 4, b) and the honey squeezed out by means of a press made from a split log (Fig. 4, c). The sack is inserted between the halves and the projecting ends of the press wrapped with a rope. A short stick is then passed through the rope and pressure exerted by torsion. The solid end of the press is fastened to a post or the corner of a house. The honey is collected in a bowl below (Fig. 4, f).

- [531] After pressing, the honey is strained through cloth or matting
[111] and stored in deep, oval wooden boxes (Fig. 4, a). The sides of the box are cut from a single piece. The bottom is a separate piece, accurately fitted, inset, and cemented in place with beeswax or gum. There is a tight-fitting lid. The honey boxes of the Zafimaniry gens are often elaborately carved. Identical honey boxes are used by the Betaïleo and Imerina, but are rare or lacking in other areas.

- 263 Honey is considered best after it has begun to thicken and crystalline and it is usually kept for some weeks or months before being used. It is used for sweetening other foods and also eaten alone, like candy. Much of it is employed in the manufacture of *bataobetan* ("honey beer") and rum.

- 237 After the honey has been pressed out, the residue is boiled and strained to collect the wax. This is poured into shallow bowls, where it solidifies. Most of the wax is exported. The natives themselves employ a little of it for coating blow-guns to make them airtight, for cementing the bottoms of wooden boxes, etc., but it is not important in their technology.

WILD VEGETABLE FOODS

- 222 The Tanala are familiar with a great variety of edible wild roots
137 and fruits. These are gathered in their season, but are of little importance except in times of food shortage. At most, they afford a little variety to the standard diet of rice and boiled greens. The principal wild fruits are the *coandiriry*, *coandroy*, *coandraposs* and etc. Wild roots include the *oipela*, *oryterets*, *malika*, *ontady*, *hafaika*, *gibepiko*, and *hafa*.